(b) what is the current estimated potential of oil in these areas;

(c) whether it is a fact that oil drilling in some areas has also been given to private sector;

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard and the estimated potential; and

(e) what would be the total production of oil after all these areas have been exploited vis-a-vis current production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) The Exploration and Production (E&P) drilling activities are currently being carried out in Assam, Tripura, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, Eastern and Western offshore areas.

(b) In place proven hydrocarbons reserves as on 01.04.2007 in the country are 8865.46 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT).

(c) and (d) Yes Sir, in Production Sharing Contracts (PSC) regime some exploration blocks have been awarded to Private (Pvt)/Joint Ventures (JVs) companies. As on 01.04.2007 the total initial in-place hydrocarbons reserves of 1467.6 MMT have been established by PVTs/JVs.

(e) Production of crude oil and gas by the terminal year of XI plan (2011-12) is projected to be 39.51 MMT and 63.23 Billion Cubic Metres respectively.

GSPA with Iran and Pakistan

4255. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Gas Sale Purchase Agreement (GSPA), involving Iran, Pakistan and India;

(b) whether Pakistan had offered to talk about the disputed transit fee on 7 February, 2008 in Islamabad;

(c) the details of the outcome of the talk;

(d) Government's plan to expedite the GSPA; and

(e) whether there is any indication that Iran may invite China if India remains reluctant to join the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Discussions on various important issues concerning the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Project are underway amongst the participating countries. The agreement will be signed only after satisfactory resolution of the issues under discussion.

Owing to prior commitment, Pakistan's offer to hold discussions on February 7 & 8, 2008 could not be taken up. However, subsequently a Ministerial-level meeting between India and Pakistan on the IPI Project has been held in Islamabad on April 25, 2008. During the meeting, issues relating to project structure, transportation tariff and transit fee were discussed. Consensus has been arrived on the principles on which the bilateral agreement on these issues will be concluded.

(e) No official communication has been received in this regard.

Shifting to alternate fuel

4256. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Brazil has cut at least one third of its oil requirement and shifting to alternate fuel;

(b) if so, whether Government has done any study as to how much it can cut on customary fuel by shifting to alternate fuels like ethanol;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how much ethanol is right now mixed and what are the prospects in the production of ethanol in the Country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Brazil has been promoting the use of ethanol as a blend with gasoline for many years and is considered to be the leading country in successfully utilizing ethanol as a fuel in the automotive sector.

(b) and (c) In an effort to supplement the consumption of petroleum product particularly for vehicular applications and also to curb emission, research has been carried out by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to explore the possibility of utilizing alternatives for supplementing petrol and diesel. Bio-fuels namely, bio-ethanol and bio-diesel; hydrogen energy and battery operated vehicles have been identified as potential future alternatives to supplement petrol and diesel. The development of bio-diesel is in a nascent state in India and is presently not been produced on commercial scale. Similarly, the hydrogen energy based systems are still in research and development stage and hydrogen is not being used as a fuel in the country as yet either in vehicles.

(d) At present, 5% ethanol mixed petrol is being sold and total requirement of ethanol for 5% blending in notified States and Union Territories is 60 Crore litre per year which comes out to approx. 1600 KL per day. As against industry's requirement of 180 crore litres of ethanol for a period of three years, the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been able to contract for 140.4 crore litres and they have so far procured 30.6 crore litres under the programme (as on 15.04.2008). However, the shortfall is due to levies/taxes on ethanol imposed by the different States. If 10% or more blending of ethanol with petrol is introduced then the demand for ethanol would increase proportionately.